



A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY TO ASSESS THE ACADEMIC STRESS AMONG NURSING STUDENTS AT SRM COLLEGE OF NURSING , KATTANKULATHUR

Ms. Chinnu Lydia Joy N.¹ | Mrs. Mercy Anchala A.² | Dr. Mrs. Hemamalini³

¹ B.Sc Nursing Final Year, SRM College of Nursing.

² Assistant Professor, SRM College of Nursing.

³ Associate Professor, SRM College of Nursing

ABSTRACT

Life would be simple indeed if all of our needs are automatically satisfied. Many obstacles, both personal and environmental factors prevent this ideal situation. Stress is a universal part which affects every individual regardless of age, gender, race, economic condition & educational status. Academic stress poses a threat to physical health as well as mental health. It is believed that academic stress and certain behaviors like competitive striving for achievement, sense of time urgency, aggressiveness towards achievement and hostility contributes to anxious, sleeplessness, less communication with peers, feeling of worthlessness and helplessness in early age of life among the students. The objective of the study is to assess the level of academic stress among nursing students in SRM College of Nursing, Kattankulathur, Kancheepuram district. Quantitative approach and descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. A total of 80 samples were selected using non probability purposive sampling technique. The tool used for the study comprises of 2 sections. section A contains demographic variables which includes age, type of family, religion, education of the father, education of the mother. Section B is a 4 point rating scale which was developed by the investigator which includes 20 questions which comprises of 10 positive and negative questions to assess the level of academic stress. The data was collected from 80 samples and the analysis was done using descriptive and inferential statistics. The result of the study concludes that majority of the students 66(82.5%) had moderate level of academic stress and 6(7.5%) students had severe academic stress.

KEY WORDS: Nursing students, stress, coping strategies, stressor.

INTRODUCTION:

Stress is a part and parcel of human lifestyle. It can serve as a driving force in terms of obtaining results, but on the other hand, non-stop stress can act as a killer in terms of performance.[1] It is a known fact that students are subjected to different kinds of stressors, such as the pressure of academics with an obligation to succeed, an uncertain future, and difficulties of integrating into the system[2]. The World Health Organization (WHO) has estimated that stress-related disorders will be one of the leading causes of disability by the year 2020[3]. Nursing colleges are now recognized as a stressful environment that often exerts a negative effect on the academic performance and psychological well-being of the students.[4]

Modern world which is said to be the world of achievements is also said to be the world of stress. Academic stress is mental distress with respect to some anticipated frustration associated with academic failure or even unawareness to the possibility of such failure. Students have to face many academic demands, for example, university examination, answering questions in the class, showing progress in their subjects, understanding what the teacher is teaching, competing with other class mates, fulfilling teachers and parents academic expectations. These demands may tax or exceed available resources of the students. As a consequence, they can be under stress, since the demand is related to achievement of an academic goal. So, academic related to the achievement of an academic goal. (Bisht 1989) has defined academic stress as a demand related to academics that tax or exceed the available resources (internal or external) as cognitively appeared by the student involved. According to her, academic stress reflects perception of individual's academic frustration, academic conflict, academic pressure and academic anxiety. She has given the definition of four components of academic stress as follows: Academic Frustration:- Academic frustration is a state caused by harm of some academic goals. Academic Conflict:- Academic Conflict is the result of two or more mutually incompatible response tendencies to academic goals. Academic Pressure:- When the student is under heavy demands of time and energy to meet academic goals. and Academic Anxiety:- Apprehension of harm to some academic goals. Academic Stress is an important factor accounting for variation in academic achievement. It also contributes to major mental health hazards, problems both physical and mental stress related diseases. (5)

Prymachuk and Richards (2007) evaluated sources of stress within 990 pre-registration nursing students. Statistically significant results indicated that academic load ($p < 0.001$) was a stressor among all branches of the nursing students. Among the participants, 67.3% reported examinations/assessments as a major stressor. Additionally, 57.5% reported fear of failing the course as a major stressor. Results from additional studies further supported the notion that academic factors led to stress within the nursing student population.

Students are subjected to different kinds of stressors such as the pressure of academics with an obligation to succeed, an uncertain future and difficulties of integrating into the system. The students also face social, emotional, physical and family problems which may affect their learning ability and academic performance. In recent years there is growing appreciation of stressors involved in Medical and nursing training College students. Too much stress can cause physical and mental health problems, reduce self-esteem and may affect students academic achievement. (6)

Academic pressure is a significant source of stress for much school students (Hashim, 2003; Olpin, 1997; Tyrrell, 1992). Identified sources of academic-related stress have included fear of falling behind with coursework, finding the motivation to study, time pressures, financial worries, and concern about academic ability (Tyrrell, 1992). Additionally, students report stress over struggling to meet academic standards, time management worries, and concerns over grades (Olpin, 1997), (7).

MATERIALS AND METHODS:

Quantitative approach and descriptive study design was adopted for the present study. The variables studied are study variables and demographic variables. The study variables are about academic stress among nursing students whereas the demographic variables include age, Type of family, Religion, Education of father, Education of mother and about recreational activities. The study was conducted in SRM College of Nursing, Kattankulathur, Kancheepuram dist, which is a part of SRM University, Kattankulathur. The setting was chosen in the basis of feasibility in terms of availability of samples and co-operation extended by the students and the management. The accessible population includes the 3rd and 4th year B.sc nursing students who are studying at SRM College of Nursing. The sample size for the present study was 80.

Non Probability Purposive Sampling technique was adopted for selecting the samples for the study. The tool used for the data collection was a structured questionnaire consists of 2 sections:

SECTION - A: Structured questionnaire to elicit demographic data of 3rd and 4th year B.Sc Nursing students.

SECTION - B: Structured questionnaire to assess academic stress which consists of 20 statements

The proposed study was approved by the dissertation committee of SRM College of Nursing, SRM University, Kattankulathur, Kancheepuram district. The reliability of the tool was done by test retest method. The r value was 0.80 which indicated a positive co-relation to proceed for the main study. The permission was obtained from Dean, SRM college of Nursing and authorities of the selected classes. Informed consent was obtained from each participant of the study before

starting data collection. Assurance was given to each subjects that anonymity of each individual would be maintained are free to withdraw from the study at any-time.

After obtaining formal approval from administration of SRM college of Nursing, the investigator explained the objectives and methods of Data collection. Data collection was done within the given period of 2 days among B.sc Nursing students in SRM college of Nursing. The Data collection was done during Day time. Self introduction about the researcher and details about the study was explained to the Samples and their consent was obtained. The Academic stress was assessed among B.Sc Nursing students using the tool. The confidentiality about the data and findings were assured to the participants, the participants took 10 mins to complete the tool, and their co-operation was imperative. Descriptive statistics such as frequency and percentage distribution was used to analyse the data collected. Inferential statistics such as oneway ANOVA, F-test/t-test was used to find out the association.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 : Frequency and percentage distribution of Demographic data of the nursing students

(N=80)

DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES	NO OF STUDENTS	%	
Age	19 years	18	22.5%
	20 years	31	38.7%
	21 years	23	28.8%
	>21 years	8	10.0%
Type of family	Nuclear family	56	70.0%
	Joint family	24	30.0%
Religion	Christian	22	27.5%
	Hindu	47	58.7%
	Muslim	11	13.8%
Education of father	Non formal	7	8.7%
	Primary (till 5th std)	16	20.0%
	Secondary (till 8th)	8	10.0%
	High school (till 10th)	15	18.7%
	Higher secondary school (till 12th)	11	13.8%
	Degree and above	23	28.8%
Education of Mother	Non formal	15	18.8%
	Primary (till 5th std)	25	31.3%
	Secondary (till 8th)	4	5.0%
	High school (till 10th)	11	13.8%
	Higher secondary school (till 12th)	4	5.0%
	Degree and above	21	26.3%
Are you participating in Recreational activities?	yes	29	36.3%
	No	51	63.7%

Table 1 depicts the demographic data of 3rd and 4th year Bsc Nursing students. Considering the age majority 38.7% of the students are in the age group of 20 years. 70.0% of them belong to Nuclear family. 58.7% of them belong to Hindu Religion. 28.8% students' fathers are educated till Degree and Above. 31.3% students' mothers are educated till Primary (till 5th std). and 63.7% students are not participating in Recreational activities.

TABLE 2: LEVEL OF ACADEMIC STRESS

(N=80)

STRESS	NO.OF STUDENTS	%
Mild stress	8	10.0%
Moderate stress	66	82.5%
Severe stress	6	7.5%
TOTAL	80	100.0%

Table 2 Reveals that level of academic stress among nursing students. It shows that 82.5% of the students had moderate stress, 7.5% of the nursing students had severe stress And 10.0% of the students had mild stress.

TABLE 3: ASSOCIATION BETWEEN THE LEVEL OF ACADEMIC STRESS AND DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

(N=80)

Demographic variables		Academic stress			Oneway ANOVA F-test/t-test
		n	Mean	SD	
Age	19 years	18	46.22	6.57	F=2.71 P=0.05* significant
	20 years	31	47.03	5.54	
	21 years	23	49.75	6.50	
	>21 years	8	52.29	5.78	
Type of family	Nuclear family	56	50.61	5.91	t=2.03 P=0.05* significant
	Joint family	24	47.53	6.90	
Religion	Christian	22	47.91	4.92	F=0.68 P=0.51 not significant
	Hindu	47	49.09	6.93	
	Muslim	11	50.55	4.99	
Education of father	Non formal	7	42.86	10.12	F=1.99 P=0.09 not significant
	Primary (till 5th std)	16	48.63	5.19	
	Secondary (till 8th)	8	47.88	3.00	
	High school (till 10th)	15	51.00	5.90	
	Higher secondary (till 12th)	11	50.09	7.42	
	Degree and above	23	49.57	4.95	
Education of mother	Non formal	15	49.20	4.04	F=0.40 P=0.84 not significant
	Primary (till 5th std)	25	48.64	8.78	
	Secondary (till 8th)	4	46.75	4.99	
	High school (till 10th)	11	47.73	3.41	
	Higher secondary (till 12th)	4	48.50	3.87	
	Degree and above	21	50.33	5.57	
Are you participating in any recreational activities	Yes	29	47.31	5.59	t=2.09 P=0.03* significant
	No	51	50.33	6.52	

Table 3 depicts that there was a significant association found with the age, type of family and participation in recreational activities.

DISCUSSION

Stress appears to be universally prevalent entity in all students, regardless of their age, sex, education, parent's occupation, and presence or absence of recreational activities.

When stress is perceived negatively or becomes excessive, students experience physical and psychological impairment (Murphy & Archer, 1996). Methods to reduce stress by students often include effective time management, social support, positive reappraisal, and engagement in leisure pursuits (Blake & Vandiver, 1988; Mattlin, Wethington, & Kessler, 1990). (8)

According to Robotham, transition to university is stressful because students may be leaving home (maybe for the first time), taking on new responsibilities, adjusting to a new social environment, maintaining a high level of academic performance as supported by Ross et al. among other things [9, 10]. In addition to all these, the individual may lose his or her social support system such as family and friends and having to make new friends. A study by Bernard and Bernard M. makes clear the importance of social factors in stress [11]. In that study, only 7% of students who attempted suicide attributed it to academic problems or factors while 75% cited social and personal problems. Finally, financial limitations has been identified as a key stressor for students. Robotham noted that a significant relationship exist between financial problems and mental health problems and that limited financial resources can have a great impact on the strains associated with studying [12].

Findings revealed that out of 180 nursing students 34.4% had moderate stress whereas 32.8% and 32.8% fall in the category of low and high stress respectively which was slightly consistent with the study conducted among undergraduates students of CMH Lahore medical college, Pakistan on 200 students which reported 30.84 overall mean perceived stress [14]. However, the nursing students were constantly facing demands and challenges of the curriculum which had being a source of stress during their total training program. They should also be

counseled on time management and effective learning strategies since that may be the only way they could overcome the academic stress they are overwhelmed with.

Undergraduate college students report experiencing elevated levels of stress during the academic year. Additionally, undergraduate college students report stress as the greatest inhibitor to academic performance and the greatest health impediment during the academic year (American College Health Association, 2007). Nursing students report perceiving higher levels of stress than other students in conjunction with elevated external stressors, including increased clinical responsibilities and course requirements (Jimenez et al., 2010).

For researchers, it is recommended that further studies on the subject of stress using other samples are needed. Since the present study is one of the first to be conducted among nursing students in college at Kattankulathur, its findings serves as baseline information for future studies. Further studies would therefore serve to validate the findings of the present study. Future researches could also use larger samples, qualitative methodologies or conduct longitudinal studies to enable us see the effect of time on student stress.

CONCLUSION:

The present study was conducted to assess the academic stress among 3rd and 4th year B.sc Nursing students in SRM college of Nursing, Kattankulathur. The results revealed that majority 82.5% of the Nursing students has moderate level of academic stress, 10.0% of them has mild level of academic stress and only 7.5 % of them has severe level of academic stress. Hence the level of academic stress can be reduced by Developing good concentration over the classes taken, by developing good relationship with peers, utilising the break times in good way, getting adequate sleep for about 8-10 hours, by indulging in Spritual activities, setting up proper time management, by participating in Recreational activities and by various other methods.

Other Recommendations included were educating newly admitted students as part of their orientation on the stresses of college life to be expected and instituting counseling services in the nursing colleges, focusing counselling on students personal concerns or worries as much as on academic ones. These methods can help Nursing students in coping up with their academic stress.

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